

Justification By Faith: The Argument

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[0:00] Romans chapter 4 and verse 9.

And I'm going to read verses 9 through 17. Big chunk of the chapter, but I think we can make it. Verse 9.

Does this blessedness, then, come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.

How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.

[1:41] For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of no effect.

Because the law brings about wrath. For where there is no law, there is no transgression.

Therefore, it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

As it is written, I have made you a father of many nations, in the presence of him whom he believed, God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did.

Now, that's a big chunk of Scripture, isn't it? And all of those circumcision, uncircumcision, circumcision, uncircumcision, all throughout the text, and it can be kind of confusing just in the reading of it.

Because it's rather complex, and yet the meaning is really quite simple. And it goes right along with what we've already been talking about. And just kind of put it maybe in a line of perspective here, so that we can keep this straight as we go throughout this book.

[3:15] Talking about justification by faith. More specifically, and we're going to get even more into this in this text, it's salvation by grace through faith.

That's the idea here. Or that great doctrine here. That's what Paul has declared repeatedly in this text. In fact, in chapter 3, verse 21, 22, let me just quote that for you.

But now the righteousness of God, apart from the law, is revealed through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe, for there's no difference.

In chapter 3, verse 28, we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Very clear. So this great doctrinal truth that was saved by grace through faith is declared here in Romans.

Also illustrated, and this is, I think, what we looked at last time, in chapter 4, verses 1 through 5. We considered Abraham as an example, as an illustration.

[4:26] To this end, that God does not grant salvation because of good works. And so Paul places Abraham up there as the chief example. Great man of works.

And yet he wasn't saved by that. And then, on kind of the opposite end of the spectrum, he uses David as an illustration, remember? And the idea there in chapter 4, verse 6 through 8, is that God does not deny salvation because of evil works.

Because it's not based upon works. It is through faith, through faith. All right, so he's declared this. It's illustrated for us. And now he's going to argue it.

Put forth a very clear argument that it is that this salvation, that our salvation is by grace through faith. And then next time we'll see it explained. And how it is experienced. And we'll get to that. And that'll take up the rest of the chapter, chapter 4. But tonight, Paul's argument. Verses 9 through 17.

[5:32] His argument. And so, I've already read the passage. And so I don't need to do that again. Let's consider the first argument.

And it's this, simply. A salvation is not granted through obedience to the rituals demanded by God. Let me say that again. Though he's going to just mention one particular ritual or rite. The idea is quite clear that salvation is not granted us through obedience to the rituals demanded by God. That's what we see here in verses 9 through 12. Now, the ritual to which Paul refers is circumcision. And I don't need to go into the details about that. All of the adults here anyway will know what that is. Okay? It's not the rite of circumcision. It's the rite of circumcision.

[6:33] That is the ritual that Paul is focusing on. Because his audience, his Jewish audience, would be focusing on that. And there were some misunderstandings about that.

Some wrong theology in relation to salvation. Based upon this rite. This ritual. For the Jewish people, circumcision defined them.

Defined who they were. It was very clear. It defined them as the covenant people of God. And so, that was very important. Genesis 17, 11. Where God gave the rite of circumcision.

He said, it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. So, it's very important to the Jewish people. This rite or ritual of circumcision.

Now, in verse 9 then, Paul apparently is, I think, responding to a question. Now, he asks a question. And so, he has framed a question.

[7:38] But he didn't just dream this up or contrive it. It certainly was a question that was coming from his Jewish audience. But even though it's a Jewish audience that's asking the question.

The substance of the question and the implications of it. Apply not just to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles. To all those who would be saved. And here's the question.

And you can see it there in the text. Does, Paul asks, does this blessedness. We'll get to that word blessedness here in a minute. Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only.

Or upon the uncircumcised also. So, he begins his argument with a question. A question he's going to answer. Now, what is this blessedness? Well, we already know that. Paul's already spelled that out.

As a matter of fact, in verses 6, 7, and 8. And we'll now go back and look at that again. But I can just sum it up this way. It's twofold. A twofold blessing. It is the righteousness of Christ.

[8:41] Credited to our eternal account. That's a blessing. And the second part of that would be the forgiveness of all of our sins. That's the blessedness of which he speaks.

Or we could sum it up into one word. Salvation. So, that's the blessedness. So, does this salvation. This blessedness.

Come upon the circumcised only. Who would that be? The Jews. Or to the uncircumcised also.

And that would be the Gentiles. That would be everybody else. Okay. And so, there's the question.

But the real question. I mean, that's a real question that he asks.

I'm not saying Paul's not asking the real question. But let's put it. Frame it in different words. The question is. Did the Jews. This is what they're asking Paul.

[9:36] Did the Jews get right with God merely by obedience to the ritual or the right of circumcision? Or let me put it another way.

Did the work of circumcision put them in right relationship with God? Is that what did it? Or let's put it this way. Let's make it as concise as possible.

As plainly as we can. Does your circumcision save you? That's what he's asking. That's what the Jews are asking. Does circumcision save you?

And of course, the answer is no. And so, since Wes has already given us the answer, then we can pray and we can go home. No, I'm just kidding.

I'm just kidding. There's certain people that I just really like to pick on. Because I know they can take it. You know. And, well, anyway. What was that?

[10:36] Okay. Okay. Well, what's Paul's answer? Well, his answer comes to us by way of Abraham again.

He's going to use Abraham as the basis for his argument. And, by the way, why would he use Abraham for the basis of his argument?

Well, it was because it was to Abraham that God gave the right of circumcision. And so, what better candidate would there be in Scripture to use if you're going to argue against salvation by way of circumcision than to pick Abraham, who's not only the father of the Jews, but also the one to whom circumcision was given.

So, he takes Abraham as the basis for his argument. And his answer to that question is as simple as ABC. In fact, you can just write down ABC.

And here it is. Abraham's righteousness before God was accounted before circumcision. Simple as that. Abraham, his righteousness before God was accounted to him before his circumcision.

[11:54] Now, look how Paul argues this. He lays it out before us. It's really quite simple. A, accounted. All right. There's no argument here.

No doubt in their minds that Abraham was righteous. He says there in the latter part of verse 9, for we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.

Clear. It was accounted to him. And Paul has already established that important truth. In fact, he did so back there. And we looked at that last week. There in verse 3.

For what does the scripture say? Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. And so, it's very clear. And you can go back to the Old Testament to where Paul was referencing.

And you would see the connection there. Abraham believed God and God credited to his account salvation. Righteousness.

[12:55] So, that's A. He was accounted. And, well, let's just, by the way, let's look at that reference. Paul said, according to the scripture, it's back there in Genesis chapter 15 and verse 6.

And it really is an interesting passage. I'm tempted to really go into the setting, the context. And I'll say just a little bit about it.

It was when Abraham, of course, came to the rescue of Lot, his brother-in-law. And Lot was living in Sodom, remember?

And the king of Sodom and a few of the other kings had kind of allied because there were five other kings against them. And they were coming to attack. And they overtook Sodom and carried the possessions.

And a lot of the people there captive, one of them was Lot. And so, Abraham rescued Lot, you remember? And he rescued, really, the king of Sodom and his people.

[14:00] And it was a great day. And God used Abraham mightily. And you might remember at the close of that, that the king of Salem came out and visited with Abraham.

Melchizedek. And blessed him. And so forth. And it was after that, in chapter 15, right on the heels of that, it says in chapter 15, verse 1, And after these things, the word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision, saying, Do not be afraid, Abraham.

I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward. But Abraham said, Lord God, what will you give me, seeing I go childless? And the heir of my house is Eleazar.

Eleazar of Damascus. And on down there, verse 4. The Lord said, This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.

Then he brought him outside and said, Look now toward the heaven and count the stars, if you are able to number them. And he said to them, to him, So shall your descendants be.

[15:12] And here's the key verse. And he, that is Abraham, believed in the Lord. And he, that is the Lord, accounted it to him for righteousness.

He believed the promise. God made this grand, great promise to Abraham. This is what's going to happen. This is what I'm going to do through you. And other places where it is repeated, we discover the full promise, all the particulars.

And we'll get to that a little bit later in our study tonight. And so God says all this to Abraham. And what does Abraham do? He believes God. Believes him. He believes him.

I believe the promise, by the way, also included the promise of Messiah. And Abraham was believing that too. We'll get to that later. And so, it was accounted to him, credited to him, or that is Abraham was saved, justified, made righteous through faith.

Through faith. That's A, accounted to him for righteousness. B and C, salvation was accounted to Abraham. B for circumcision. And that's key here.

[16:20] Impulse argument. And it's indisputable. Verse 10 says there, if you'll see it, how then was it accounted?

While he was circumcised or uncircumcised? And Paul's answer gives the answer right away. Not while circumcised. But while uncircumcised.

Now, where in Scripture did God make his covenant with Abraham and institute the right of circumcision?

Where does that happen? Well, it's in Genesis chapter 17. Where the Bible says, when Abraham was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to Abraham and said to him, I am almighty God, walk before me and be blameless.

And I will make my covenant between me and you and will multiply you exceedingly. And verse 4, my covenant is with you and you shall be a father of many nations.

[17:22] He's kind of repeating this same promise again. And he does so at least four times in Scripture. And down there in verse 7, and I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you in their generations.

For an everlasting covenant to be God to you and your descendants after you. And verse 11, and you shall be circumcised. I'm sure that was good news coming to Abraham at the age of 99 anyway.

You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your four skins. And it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. So there it is. There is God enacting or beginning or demanding this right of circumcision there in Genesis chapter 17.

Now when in Scripture was Abraham saved? We just looked at it. Genesis chapter 15. And verse 6. We just looked at that a moment ago. Now even in your Bibles you know that chapter 15 comes before chapter 17. Doesn't it? Abraham. And unless the writer, unless Moses is digressing, and he's not, then we know chronologically speaking, his salvation came before his circumcision.

[18:46] As a matter of fact, to be specific, it came 14 years before his circumcision. Abraham was saved before, 14 years before his circumcision.

So what's the conclusion? The conclusion is the blessing of getting right with God, being accepted by God, did not come by means of circumcision.

It came before circumcision. God declared Abraham righteous, independent of his circumcision. It came by grace through faith.

He believed in the Lord, and he, the Lord, accounted it to him for righteousness. All right? So it's very clear, isn't it? Argument is put forward. It's indisputable. Even the most ignorant of Jews would have understood that.

And so what's the point of circumcision then? What's the point of that? If it doesn't save you, doesn't help save you, if it is independent of salvation altogether, then what's the point of it?

[19:57] Well, that's what he's going to tell us, or how he's going to explain in verses 11 and 12. He opens verse 11 with these words.

He says, and he received, that is, Abraham received the sign of circumcision. Do you see that there in the text? It's the sign of it, of circumcision.

And so first of all, circumcision was meant to be a sign for something or of something. Right? That's what signs do. Signs point the way to something.

I mean, they all do that. If you're driving through Tulsa, and you look up and you see one of those green signs that says Oklahoma City, and then there's a little arrow kind of slanted over to one side, then you know that if you want to go to Oklahoma City, then you follow that sign and take that exit or take that highway or whatever it is so you can get to Oklahoma City.

Right? The sign's very clear. Oklahoma City, big letters. And if that's where you want to go, then you follow that sign. Now, the sign is not Oklahoma City.

[21:10] It's a sign that's pointing to it. Now, sometimes our kids, when they were younger, and it hasn't been very long since Jonathan made this kind of observation when he was little, and we were driving through, say, we're headed, and I think this is the time that I can remember, we're headed to the Smoky Mountains.

Can't wait to get there. And all of our boys know that Knoxville is the major city. When we get to Knoxville, we're there almost. And so we're driving through Nashville, and there's a sign that says Knoxville and an arrow.

And our boys say, we're there! There's Knoxville! And we have to say, no, that's just the sign pointing to it. We still have several hours to go, you know.

So the sign is not, I mean, if it's Oklahoma City, that's not Oklahoma City. That's just a sign, right, that points to it.

And now, I would say to you that the sign is important, isn't it? I mean, the sign, Oklahoma City, it has some value to it.

[22 : 18] It's of great value to those who want to go to Oklahoma City. Right? Similarly, circumcision is a sign of something.

A physical mark, not a spiritual mark, not the right of circumcision. The right of circumcision was a physical mark that signified a special identity.

A specific identity. A sign, it was a sign that the Jews belonged to God. Belonged to Him as His chosen people, His special people.

They were His people, and they were the recipients of His blessings. And they also were responsible for the duties God had given to them, and one day they would answer for that.

And so, that's what the circumcision was. It was a sign. Pointed to something. Sign of a special relationship. Relationship. But the circumcision was not the relationship itself.

[23 : 23] Just pointed to it. Then, He says that it is a seal. You see that there? Somewhere here.

Verse 11. And He received the sign of circumcision. A seal. A seal. So, it's a sign and a seal. Right? Both at the same time. It's a seal. Now, a seal of what? Well, He tells us. The righteousness of faith. It's a seal of the righteousness of faith. Which Abraham had. That is, not the seal.

The faith. A seal of the faith which Abraham had. In God. And He had that before He was circumcised.

[24 : 29] Now, a sign points to something. A seal authenticates something. Right?

If you have a passport. You know that your passport is not valid. Unless it has the great seal of the United States. Affixed to it. Certain documents are not valid.

Without the attestation. Of a notary republic. And the seal. That's placed upon the document. See?

The seal means. This is the real thing. This is valid. It is the outward. Visible. Observable.

Sign. Or seal. The authentication. Of the inward reality. Now then. For what exactly? If that's what circumcision is.

[25 : 29] Then what exactly did circumcision serve as a seal of? Something more than just simply. That.

Those circumcised were the people of God. Or part of a nationality. Much more than that. What then? Well, Paul says the righteousness of faith.

That's much bigger. Than just the. The identity. Of a race. Isn't it?

I mean the righteousness of faith is something much bigger. Something that goes beyond. All boundaries. All nationalities.

All ethnics. And so forth. The circumcision was a seal. That authenticated something. And what did it authenticate?

[26 : 32] Abraham's faith. It was a sign of that. A faith. That. Results. In righteousness.

A faith Abraham exercised. Before he was circumcised. And he received the sign of circumcision.

Fourteen years later. Because. The real. Seal.

The real seal. Or. The real circumcision. Had already taken place. And it took place in his heart.

That's what we need to get. Abraham was circumcised. In the heart. Fourteen years. Before he was circumcised.

In his body. There was a spiritual circumcision. That took place. In his life. In his heart. Before. The physical. Circumcision.

[27 : 33] Took place. And circumcision. Of the heart. Was always. God's plan. Even back. In Abraham's day.

And before Abraham's day. The circumcision. Of the heart. Was the. The big deal. With God. We need to understand that. In fact. It. It.

You can find that. In a number of places. In scripture. In fact. Even in the Old Testament. A couple of places. Deuteronomy. Chapter 30. In verse 6. And the Lord.

Your God. Will circumcise. Your heart. And the heart. Of your descendants. To love. The Lord. Your God. With all your heart. With all your soul.

With. That you may live. It's not circumcision. Of the body here. God's. Desire. Always. That we be circumcised.

[28 : 27] In the heart. Jeremiah. Chapter 4. In verses. 3 and 4. For thus says the Lord. To the men of Judah.

In Jerusalem. Break up your fallow ground. And do not sow among thorns. Circumcise yourselves. To the Lord. And take away.

The foreskins. Of your hearts. The circumcision. Of the heart. You men of Judah. And inhabitants of Jerusalem. Lest my fury. Come forth like fire.

See it's always been God's desire. His intent. His plan. That our hearts. Be circumcised. That our. That the sin. Be cut away.

The sin of the flesh. Our fleshliness. Be cut away from our hearts. And we go into. The New Testament. Romans. Chapter 2. Verse 28. For he is not.

[29 : 25] We've already looked at this. Looked at this several weeks ago. For he is. A Jew. But he. Is a Jew. Excuse me. For he is not.

A Jew. Who is one outwardly. Nor is circumcision. That which is outward. In the flesh. But he is a Jew. Who is one inwardly.

And circumcision. Is that. Of the heart. In the spirit. Not. In the letter. Whose praise. Is not from men. But from God.

See this is salvation. And it's the circumcision. Of the heart. Of the heart. Okay. So. Let's. Just. Take in the rest of this.

Here. In these verses. Real quickly. And then we'll move on. And let me just read it to you. From another translation. In fact. This is more a paraphrase. It's.

[30 : 20] Wiest's. Expanded translation. And you don't have that before you. But just listen to this. And he received. This Abraham. Abraham received. The.

Attesting. Sign. Of circumcision. And he received that. As a seal. Of the. Righteous. Character. Of the faith. Which he had. In his uncircumcision. Before he was circumcised. And it resulted. In something. Resulted. In his being. The father.

Of all who believe. All who believe. While in the state of uncircumcision. That's you. That's you and me. In order. That there may be. Put. To their account.

Righteousness. And the father. Of circumcision. To those. Who are not. Of the circumcision. Only. But to those. Who walk. In the footsteps. Of the faith. Of our father. Abraham. When he.

[31 : 15] Was in uncircumcision. The short answer. Is. It's faith. Faith. Faith. Is what's important. Salvation.

Is. By grace. Through faith. And not. Through. Any obedience. Any obedience. To a rite. Or a ritual. Or a ceremony. Even those. That were demanded. By God. And that applies. Not only. To circumcision.

But something. More relevant. For us. Would be what? Baptism. Now. I'm not going to make. A comparison. Between circumcision.

And baptism. Very little. Comparison. Between the two. Rites. The similarity. Is. In. The fact. That they are.

[32 : 10] Signs. Of something. They. They. Are. An. Outward. Of. A. Symbol.

Of. What's. True. On. The inside. And so. The baptism. Does not. Save us. We're saved.

Then. Baptized. Similarly. There is. In a similar way. That Abraham. Was saved. And then later. Was circumcised. All right.

Now. Let's move on. We sure need to. Salvation. Then. Is not granted. Through obedience. To the rituals. Demanded by God.

And then number two. Salvation. Is not gained. Through obedience. To the rules. Declared. By God. Salvation.

[33 : 06] Is not gained. Through obedience. To the rules. Declared. By God. Verses 13. Through 15. Let me read that. Again.

Just those three verses. For the promise. That he would be. The heir of the world. Was not to Abraham. Or to his seed. Through the law. But through the righteousness. Of faith. For if those. Who are of the law. Are heirs. If keeping the law. Makes you an heir. Then faith. Is made void. And the promise. Made of no effect.

Because the law. What does it do? It brings about wrath. For where there is no law. There is no transgression. All right. Now what. Is he saying here? So.

You see. Paul. Argues. Abraham. Saved by grace. Through faith. Not by circumcision. Also.

Abraham. Was saved by grace. Through faith. Not by. And not by keeping the law.

[34:03] Not by keeping the law. Or the rules. Declared by God. Let's just kind of walk. Through this text. Slowly. Well not too slowly. Verse 13.

He says. For the promise. The promise. And what's. What's the promise? Well the short answer. Paul gives us.

He gives us a short answer. Because he assumes. We know the. The larger answer. And maybe we don't. That's why we're going to look at the larger answer too. But the short answer is.

The promise is. That he would be the heir of the world. He would be the heir of the world. That's. A pretty big deal. Isn't it? The complete answer is given in.

Genesis. Well it's given several places. But it's given in Genesis. Chapter 12. And verse 1 to 3. And here it is.

[34:59] Here are all the particulars of the promise. The promise by the way. That we already read. That Abraham believed. He believed. And God credited righteousness to his account.

And here it is. All the particulars. Now the Lord said to Abram. Get out of your country. Where was that? That was Ur of the Chaldeans.

Get out of that country. By the way it was a pagan country. Idolatrous country. Get away from your family. They were idol worshippers. And by the way so was Abraham. And from your father's house. To a land. That I will show you. So the first part of the promise was a land. And I will make you a great nation. Then there's the second part of the promise.

A great nation. A nation. Big promise. And I will bless you. He said. And make your name great. And you shall be a blessing.

[36:01] And I will bless those who bless you. And I will curse him who curses you. And so the blessing. He's saying I'm going to give you a land. Give you people. A nation. In fact I'm going to give you nations.

And you're going to be a blessing to them. And I will curse those who curse you. And then he says this. And in you. Here's part of the. Part of the covenant. The promise.

And in you. All the families of the earth. Shall be blessed. All the families of the earth. Shall be blessed. Here's the fourth part. Of the promise.

And it is the Messiah. Messiah. The Savior. You say it doesn't say that there. Well you. You tell me. How. How. Would Abraham be able to bless. All. The people of the world. All the nations of the world. Only one way. Through a Redeemer.

[37:00] A Savior. Messiah. That's included. Did Abraham know that? Yeah. Yeah. He did. In fact.

In John. Chapter. Eight. And verse fifty. We learned that. Listen to it. Jesus said.

Your father Abraham. Rejoiced. To see my day. And he saw it. And was glad. What did Abraham believe in?

It was counted unto him. As righteousness. He believed in the promise of God. That included. First of all. A land. And a nation.

And that he would be a blessing. Not only to a nation. But to all nations. And through him. All nations. All peoples of the world. Would be blessed. A Redeemer. A Redeemer.

[37:55] And so that's the. Those are the particulars. Of the blessings. So let's move on. The promise. That promise. That promise. We just. Just talked about. Was not to Abraham.

Or to his seed. Through the law. Who was Abraham's seed? Or. Who are Abraham's seed? Massé. Well.

In one sense. It's Jesus. In Galatians. He speaks of seed. In the singular. Speaking of Christ. But it also includes.

All those. Who are united. With Christ. Through faith. Who would they be? Every one of us. Every one of us. In fact. Galatians 3.29.

Says that. And if you are Christ. Then you are Abraham's seed. And heirs. According to the promise. The promise. So the promise. Includes all of us. And it was given to Abraham.

[38:49] And to his seed. That's. That's us. And how do we get that promise? By keeping the law? No. No. No. The promise.

The promise. Was not to Abraham. Look. Look at what he says here. Not to Abraham. Or to his seed. Through the law. Or literally. Through law. But through the righteousness. Of faith. Of faith. Now. When was. The promise. Given to Abraham. Well.

We read it there. Genesis chapter 12. That's when the promise. Was given. And not only to Abraham. But through Abraham. And ultimately. Through Christ. It's given to us. Back there in Genesis chapter 12. Now let me ask you this. You Bible scholars. When was the law given? 450 years later God gave it to Moses God gave Abraham the promise and he received it by faith 450 years before the law was given so how in the world then could anyone argue that our salvation comes through keeping the law when Abraham was granted salvation even before the law was given you see Abraham was saved 14 years before circumcision was demanded by God and Abraham was saved 450 years before the law was declared by God the promise was given according to the righteousness of faith and so if the promise of salvation comes through keeping the law if that were the case then we have some serious problems number one our faith is then rendered useless that's what he says in verse 14 let's get back there to Romans real quickly we'll wrap this up for if those who are of the law are heirs that is if you can keep the if you are saved by keeping the law and if that's God's plan by the way and that's what you got to do then he says there faith is made void because listen folk faith says I can't do it that's what faith says [41:25] I can't do it I can't keep that law I can't be perfect I can't deserve salvation I can't earn salvation I can never earn your grace God I can't do it that's what faith says the legalist says I can do it if I try real hard that's what a lot of people are trying to do today trying real hard and you can't have both ways either it is by keeping the law or it is by grace through faith you can't have a mixture of the two and this is what Paul is saying if it's by keeping the law then your faith is useless just forget faith you get out there and you know dot all your I's and cross all your T's and keep all the Ten Commandments perfectly by the way and then you'll get salvation I hope maybe probably not so that leads to the second thing if it's by keeping the law then the promise is rendered worthless now you've got to follow this logic this is very important your faith is not only useless no need for faith it's of no value because it's all works and so then therefore the promise is rendered worthless if you can earn your salvation by keeping the law then you do not need

God to promise you anything but more importantly even if you were to try to earn the promise then you would be doomed to failure and since God knows that you would be doomed to failure then if that's the way to get the promise then the promise is empty you understand what I'm saying let me illustrate it this way what if I promised here tonight a hundred dollars to the first person who can stand on the ledge of the balcony right over there jump and do five flips and land on the edge of the balcony on this side you can do that first person does that I'll give you a hundred dollars hey I'm serious I'll give you a hundred dollars any takers no alright let's make it a thousand maybe the promise is not good enough let's make it a thousand hey how about a hundred thousand a million any takers might have some who'd try how about a billion let's make it a trillion it's a promise I promise you I promise you if you can jump from the balcony there do five flips and land over there I'll give you a trillion dollars it's a bona fide promise I promise you you understand you see it doesn't matter how much money I offer or promise if it's impossible it's impossible and so the promise is worthless do you understand can you make the connection then to those who think that keeping the law will earn your salvation who think that God has promised entry into heaven for those who keep the law then you're in big trouble because you cannot do it cannot do it and so if God's telling you keep my law and live forever keep these rules perfectly and I will reward you with eternal life then since we cannot do it then what good is the promise no matter how grand and wonderful the promise is and so therefore thirdly your future is rendered hopeless and that's what he says in verse 15 my bible turned the right direction because the law brings about wrath and it does so because we cannot obey it perfectly and because we cannot obey it perfectly it brings wrath for where there is no law there is no transgression somebody might argue well then why does God just not give the law then there wouldn't be any sin that's not what it's saying the sin is there the point is you don't know it's there until God gives the law your hopeless condition your sinfulness utter sinfulness and your need for a savior you would never know apart from the law the law can't save you but it can as a schoolmaster drive you to the grace of God salvation so your future is rendered hopeless isn't it James 2 10 says for whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet stumble in one point he's guilty of all of all you can't keep the law perfectly you and I can't even keep all of

them not even one of them perfectly we might be able to come close on some but we're going to miss it on others let's just take the ten commandments we cannot obey them perfectly imagine yourself you're hanging by a chain let's say and below you there's a 1,000 feet down to the bottom of this canyon and there are jagged rocks at the bottom and you're hanging there by a chain that has ten links the ten commandments let's say and you look up and every link of that chain is made out of forged steel except for one and it's made out of marshmallow you wouldn't make it would you get Paul's flow of argument here salvation is not granted through obedience to the rituals demanded by God and salvation is not gained through obedience to the rules declared by God but graced but we are graced salvation is graced through obedience to the response decreed by God and what is that response faith it's faith and that's pretty much the way he ends this there for it is of faith faith that it might be according to grace so that the promise that promise to Abraham and to his seed the promise might be sure how is it sure because it's by grace through faith so it's sure to all the seed not only to those who are of the law the Jews but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham by the way was Abraham a Jew who's a Gentile who's our father father of faith Abraham who is the father of us all in the sense that it was his faith that we must have as it's written I've made you a father of many nations in the presence of him who believed God in the presence of God the one he believed who gives life to the dead and calls those which do not exist those things that do not exist as though they do and don't have time to tell you what that how that puts the icing on the cake but other than to say that you can trust God and his promises are sure